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**INFLUENCE: MAXIMIZING EFFECTS TO CREATE LONG-TERM  
STABILITY**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

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**3 May 2010**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **INFLUENCE: MAXIMIZING EFFECTS TO CREATE LONG-TERM STABILITY**

As contemporary warfare becomes increasingly irregular in character it is necessary for the modern force to understand the dynamics of both insurgencies and the governments the insurgents seek to usurp. In such an environment the center of gravity is typically the population, and the preponderance of efforts must be focused on influencing that population more effectively than the adversary. The commonly used and ambiguous term Influence Operations does not comprehensively address the scope of such operations, and a proposal for a new joint doctrinal term is contained herein. The dynamic Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P) has evolved and successfully applied Influence Operations using multiple lines of operation, including Capacity Building, Civil-Military Operations, Information Operations, and Intelligence Support Operations over the past decade. Influence Operations such as these have become the most relevant focus as the main effort in a whole-government approach to counterinsurgency. To succeed in achieving long-term regional stability, regardless of the environment, leaders at all levels must prepare their forces for a myriad of contingencies and operating environments by establishing a common understanding of the current global threat.

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## **Influence: Maximizing Effects to Create Long-Term Stability**

### **Introduction**

*“The acme of skill of the true warrior is to be victorious without fighting.” –Sun Tzu*

As the nature of contemporary warfare continues to evolve geographically, demographically and politically, it has become more crucial for commanders and staffs conducting full-spectrum counterinsurgency operations to truly understand the complexity of the operating environment and employ forces and assets in a predictive and multispectral manner. Unlike the majority of conflicts in history, modern warfare has become increasingly irregular<sup>i</sup> in character. That is to say, similarly-matched force on force conflicts are becoming more of an exception, while protracted conflicts between state and non-state actors have become the norm. In such an environment the center of gravity is typically the population, and the preponderance of efforts must be focused on addressing-or influencing-that population more effectively than the adversary.

The evolution and ongoing success of the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P) is an ideal example with which to illustrate this concept. Operation Enduring Freedom, Philippines (OEF-P) is an economy of force operation that relies on the synchronized efforts and expertise of joint, multinational and interagency partners. It is a deliberately choreographed effort wherein the U. S. Ambassador, the commander, and the Philippine government share common strategic and regional goals, and apply all assets and resources in a manner that maximizes cooperation and progress – everyone “rows together” towards the shared ultimate goals of regional stability and long-term effective partnerships. In this unique and complex environment, Influence Operations are winning the fight against radical insurgents and swaying the relevant

population towards the legitimate and recognized government. To succeed in achieving this long-term regional stability, regardless of the environment, Influence Operations must be the predominant focus in combating an insurgency.

### **Influence Operations Foundations**

Achieving effects such as these takes willing partners, the *right* force, excruciating patience, and a long time – longer than most commanders and politicians have the stomach for. It is an art that can only be learned by a willing mind, and applied by those who recognize that constant change is the only certain factor. COL James Linder, the commander of JSOTF-P in 2005-2006, began achieving these effects by reinforcing the mindset of patience and influence within his own task force, rather than using primarily kinetic solutions. His initial guidance was to focus efforts not primarily on the insurgents, but on children between the ages of 6 and 12, as well as women. He believed that the older children had, for the most part, made up their minds about the Philippine Government and about what ideologies they believed. COL Linder recognized that the Philippine Government, with U. S. assistance, was in a long fight to influence the younger generation over the course of several years, through a deliberate campaign of positive messages and actions across a large geographic and demographically diverse area. Lending legitimacy to the Philippine Government and Security Forces was important, so that their population would see them not as tyrants, but as public servants who serve and protect citizens. COL Linder noted that ten years into this strategy, when one of those children is a teenager who has bought into radical propaganda and been led astray, he will be looking through a sniper scope at U. S. or Philippine Security Forces (PSF). [When those crosshairs line up on a Soldier and that teenager sees a U. S. or

Filipino flag on the sleeve, he will hesitate, remembering all of the good that the PSF and Americans have brought. That hesitation is the effect we are trying to achieve, as we have truly penetrated the thought processes of the insurgents and sown the seeds of doubt in their own causes].<sup>ii</sup> COL Linder took the doctrinal term of “Information Operations (IO)” and told his people to think of IO as “Influencing Others.”<sup>iii</sup> This mindset took hold and has since become the mantra of JSOTF-P in conducting IO and Influence Operations in the Philippines.

Joint Doctrine defines Information Operations (IO) as “the integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own. Also called IO.”<sup>iv</sup> However, there is no standard doctrinal definition of “*Influence Operations*.” Rand defines Influence Operations as “the coordinated, integrated, and synchronized application of national diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and other capabilities in peacetime, crisis, conflict, and post-conflict to foster attitudes, behaviours [sic], or decisions by foreign target audiences that further interests and objectives.”<sup>v</sup> However, this broad definition is not all encompassing. Perhaps a more appropriate description of Influence Operations is as follows:

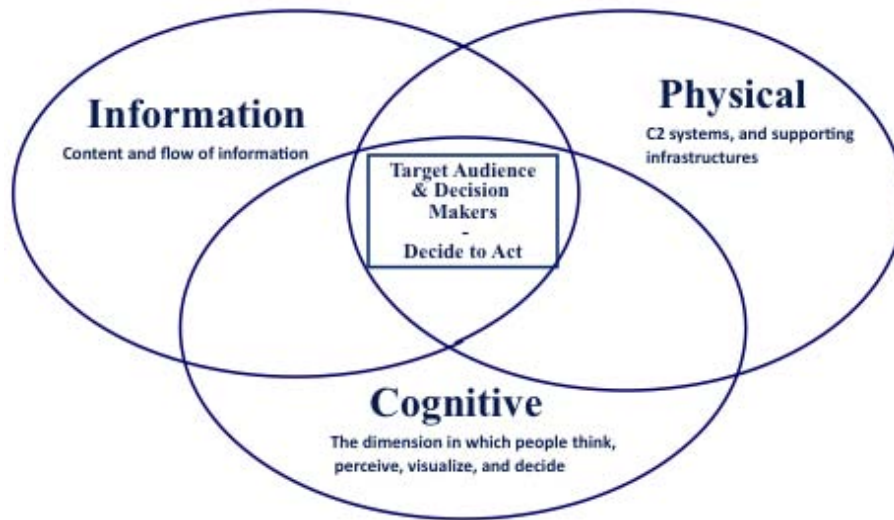
Influence Operations are the deliberately planned and synergetic actions designed to produce desired effects through a coordinated and multi-dimensional program using forces with adept language, cultural and regional experience. Implemented in a by-with-through methodology with a host nation government, Influence Operations are used to shape operational conditions by changing the behavior, attitudes, civil disposition, and operating environmental conditions across socio-politically homogenous<sup>vi</sup> or disparate populations<sup>vii</sup>. Influence Operations

are continuously refined as a result of layered and interrelated desired effects to facilitate other military and political goals, or deny military and political advantages to an adversary. These operations are conducted through synchronized psychologically impacting actions and messages using dynamic direct and indirect social media across multiple lines of persuasion to affect nodal and demographic vulnerabilities in social networks.<sup>viii</sup>

This is not to be confused with *Information Operations (IO)*, the aforementioned broader term.

Information Operations (IO) are *methods and techniques* employed, for purposes of counterinsurgency, during an Influence Operation. While IO methods may be appropriately applied in the same manner in several different parts of the world, Influence Operations are regionally unique and individually complex. Perhaps the most important critical factor is that enduring success is reliant on the effective cooperation between the involved joint, interagency and multinational partners. All stakeholders must understand the desired endstate, the collective goals, and the capabilities and limitations of the collective effort. Each player must additionally understand that every action (or failure to act) has an associated message to one or more of the target groups. Whether or not friendly actions are intended to have psychological or cognitive effects<sup>ix</sup> on the population, government, security forces or other audience, they undoubtedly will. Therefore, all executors of an Influence Operation must proactively and cognitively manage messages and perceptions (see Figure 1 below).<sup>x</sup>





**Figure 1:** This diagram, provided by U. S. Naval War College Professor Richard Crowell, represents an example of the Information Environment (IE). *Cognitive message management constitutes “maneuvering in the Information Environment.”*

Most importantly, in addition to political and cultural awareness, all players must understand the greatest needs and desires of the population, as well as those of the adversary. It is critical for the reader to understand that Influence Operations are not a single Line of Operation (LOO) or Line of Effort (LOE), but rather an underlying method of engagement that is deliberately and continuously interwoven into all LOO/LOE in an operation or campaign. They are part of the overall theme of an operation, generally sharing a common purpose to change behaviors and attitudes and end the necessity for military actions. Further, Influence Operations are proactive in nature and are dependent on constant feedback from friendly forces, enemy forces, and the population. One must take a mental step away from conventional warfare and realize that the battleground is the population in order to truly comprehend the nature, methods, and tactical/operational goals of Influence Operations.

### **Population as the Center of Gravity**

Linda Robinson, who accompanied a Special Forces A-Team conducting counterinsurgency, states that “population is the center of gravity, and the key to winning in any war.”<sup>xi</sup> More specifically, *everything* revolves around the population to some degree in defeating an insurgency. The French counterinsurgency theorist Roger Trinquier said, “The *sine qua non* of victory in [insurgent/counterinsurgent] warfare is the unconditional support of the people.”<sup>xii</sup> A counterinsurgency fight is entirely a struggle for influence over the center of gravity (CoG) in order to achieve the ultimate objective of defeating the non-state actors or the non-state-sponsored actors. Gordon McCormick, currently a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, is the author of several articles and papers analyzing insurgencies and populations, including “The Dynamics of Insurgency.” Here he breaks down the “mobilisable [sic] population” into three distinct categories: “core supporters of the state, core supporters of the insurgency, and a large middle group of individuals who are prepared to support one side or the other depending on the circumstances of the struggle.”<sup>xiii</sup> The first two groups are generally ideologically driven and are highly unlikely to change sides. For the core supporters of the state, a task force conducting Influence Operations generally provides the government with whatever resources, training, or support is most appropriate for the operating environment. This assumes that the Influence Operations are in support of a legitimate and recognized government. For the core supporters of the insurgency, the ideologically driven “hard-liners” that are unlikely to be swayed, the task force must apply an indirect approach (short of unilateral kinetic operations) to disrupt, deny, or otherwise prohibit their extreme actions and behavior. That leaves the large middle group, the impressionable majority of the population, as the focal point of an influence campaign.

Most people have an initial preference towards one side, but the side they choose to support depends on the “expected costs and benefits of their alternatives.”<sup>xiv</sup> Here is where the greatest opportunity exists for the side that has the will and resources to engage the population, often times on their terms.

Consider, for example, a narrative well known to the SOF community – the “ball of rice” scenario<sup>xv</sup>. A farmer – call him Waleed – lives in an extremely rural area and is barely able to scrape enough food together to feed his family of six. What little income he has goes to fueling his truck to bring the harvest to the nearest market. One day a man appears at his house with some money (more than he would make in a season), food for his family, and a rifle. The man tells Waleed “if you join our group of ‘freedom fighters’ we will provide a ball of rice for each of your family members every day for as long as you are a member.” Waleed says that he does not know of this group, nor does he wish to fight, but the man reassures him that the rifle can also be used for the protection of his family and crops, and that “the likelihood of ever fighting is very low.” Waleed agrees and makes his mark in the man’s book. Waleed is now a full-fledged, armed member of an anti-government insurgent group. That group successfully influenced him to join by exploiting his needs and isolation. He weighed the cost – the small chance he may have to pick up his rifle and fight – with the benefit – guaranteed food for his family, one of his greatest needs. Now that he has a relationship with the man who recruited him, it will be easy for the group to further influence his actions on the basis of whatever cause they hold. In this micro-scale example, an insurgent group recognized the needs of the relevant population and swayed him to support one side. On a macro scale, the concepts are the same, and our contemporary adversaries are just as savvy at influencing the large

middle group of fence sitters as coalition forces are. Successful Influence Operations recognize the criticality of popular support and base every decision, both short and long term, on the projected first-, second- and third-order effects.

### **Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P)**

As an illustrative example of this engagement method, the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P) has, through significant trial and error, mastered the synergetic approach to influencing the target population and produced considerable measurable results. These results directly support both U. S. Mission and USPACOM Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP) goals in the Philippines. The significance of this success is that the entire mission is a choreographed effort in which every element has a specific function in the operating environment, and must be guided, surged or withdrawn at any given time to apply appropriate pressure at the appropriate time and place. Conditions of the CoG and the adversary directly affect the means and timing of force application. Influence Operations are broken down and interwoven into each specific and mutually supportive LOO, and each LOO ultimately supports the operational goal of winning the population through superior influence. Some threat groups in the Philippines are surprisingly clever at the same type of influential tactics, so it is important to understand their goals and methods in attempting to achieve influence superiority.<sup>xvi</sup> For example, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have active recruiting campaigns that highlight, or even misrepresent, any actions of the Philippine Government that have caused hardship to the people of Mindanao. There are many other smaller Islamist groups that contribute to the overall threat to stability in the Philippines (see Appendix A – Threat Groups in the

Philippines), like the Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG) and Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM). The New People's Army (NPA) is not Islamist at all, but rather the militant wing of the Communist Peoples' Party of the Philippines. Also known as the Communist Terrorist Movement, their goals are entirely different but many of their methods (i.e. delegitimizing the government, recruiting from the population, etc.) similarly contribute to regional instability.<sup>xvii</sup> However, the number of groups and their idiosyncrasies does not significantly affect the overall JSOTF-P engagement method.

### **JSOTF-P Method of Engagement**

In 2006 the commander of Special Operations Pacific (SOCPAC), Lieutenant General David P. Fridovich, asserted, "We think there's a model here worth showcasing . . . there's another way of doing business."<sup>xviii</sup> During a time of more kinetic solutions in Afghanistan and Iraq, LTG Fridovich highlighted JSOTF-P's highly effective alternative approach to rooting out terrorists and winning the support of the population by, through, and with a willing host nation. JSOTF-P is an economy of force mission that relies on unity of effort between joint, multinational and interagency partners. The task force works closely with the U. S. Mission in the Philippines to ensure the deconfliction and accomplishment of U. S. regional goals, which has proven to be a mutually beneficial relationship at all levels. All participants recognize the importance of the "whole government" approach and generally strive towards achieving the mid- to long-term goals without the stereotypical political infighting. JSOTF-P practices centralized planning and decentralized execution. The commanders and staff understand how to most effectively employ each component of the task force, which is critical when flexing a particular capability forward to support or execute a mission, or preempt or respond to

an incident. There are also strong cultural bonds between each of the numerous sub-elements.

One of the strongest cultural memes within JSOTF-P is the overall adherence to the first SOF Principle – “understand your operating environment.” While Influence Operations are not SOF-specific, SOF may be the best suited to synchronize influence efforts. John A. Nagl, who has written extensively about counterinsurgency, notes that “not all Soldiers can adapt, and putting those who cannot in command of a counterinsurgency effort is counterproductive.”<sup>xix</sup> The requirement is not for SOF Soldiers; rather it is for *adaptable* Soldiers. SOF are traditionally the force of choice when adaptation and ambiguity are prescribed. Though in the past few years in the Middle East several other types of military units proved to be remarkably capable of adaptation to their operating environment. The other part of adaptation is to the culture. Cultural awareness and willingness to engage in strange and unfamiliar situations are critical to gaining credibility, and therefore to gaining and maintaining legitimacy. Retired Major General Robert Scales, Jr. notes that “every young Soldier should receive cultural and language instruction, not to make every Soldier a linguist but to make every Soldier a diplomat with enough sensitivity and linguistic skills to understand and converse with the indigenous citizen on the street.”<sup>xx</sup> Of note, SOF Soldiers receive rigorous interactive cultural and language instruction as a matter of baseline training. This is primarily due to the SOF organizational mission sets that require these as core skills, specifically Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Counterinsurgency (COIN), and Unconventional Warfare (UW). However, while a solid understanding of (and appreciation for) the culture provides a collective knowledge base, there is a significant

amount of planning, analysis and synchronization that is required to achieve influence superiority.

JSOTF-P has a dynamic Influence Operations Working Group that frequently meets to analyze feedback-driven mission requirements, ongoing projects, future opportunities and past and projected effects of friendly actions. The construct of the working group is comprehensive, and is generally run by the JSOTF-P Operations Officer (J3) and the Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Company Commander, who generally doubles as the J39. While the working group meets twice a week, or when needed based on mission requirements, there is a smaller standing Influence Operations Cell that consists of the J3, J39, J2, Civil Affairs LNO, and Public Affairs Officer. This cell constantly ensures that the coalition messages are being correctly propagated, and that they are appropriately applied along each of the lines of operation. This cell is critical to predictive analysis, managing operations within the Information Environment and synchronizing all lines of operation.

There are four Lines of Operation (LOO), or cornerstones, of the mission: Capacity Building, Civil-Military Operations, Information Operations, and Intelligence Support Operations. All contribute to the overall influence campaign, and are based on proven strategies that have measurable effects.<sup>xxi</sup> The Influence Operations Cell publishes a series of products with messages designed to highlight all JSOTF-P major activities. The primary target audiences are the Philippine Government, the Philippine population, and U. S. Government offices. The Influence Operations Cell publishes the JSOTF-P purpose as follows: “In the fight against terrorism, the JSOTF-P assists the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in bringing peace and prosperity in Mindanao.

[We are here to] help strengthen security forces, set the conditions for good governance, defeat terrorist organizations, and protect U. S. and Philippine citizens from terrorist attacks. At the invitation of the Philippine Government, the United States is here to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines as they create a secure and stable environment.”<sup>xxii</sup> Note the phrase at the end “...as *they* create a secure and stable environment.” It is critical for the population to see their own government in the lead, which makes one of JSOTF-P’s primary missions to build the capacity of the Philippine Security Forces to operate more autonomously.

### **Capacity Building**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has had some difficulty overcoming the stigma of an oppressive and heavy-handed force. Throughout recent history the AFP has applied more force than perhaps necessary. Examples include the Huk Rebellion in the 1940s and the Jabidah Massacre in 1968.<sup>xxiii</sup> McCormick comments, “In response to the growing and systematic abuse by undisciplined government forces, the Huks and their support base within the population expanded rapidly.”<sup>xxiv</sup> Through consistency of actions worldwide, U. S. Forces generally hold the moral high ground, and appear to most as a force for peace that respects the Rule of Law. Early in the execution of OEF-P, several of the teams reported that the local populations throughout Mindanao were wary, even, untrusting, of the AFP based on past incidents or word of mouth passed between tribal communities.<sup>xxv</sup> However, when U. S. advisors were present for community activities the population was much more comfortable engaging with both U. S. and R. P. Soldiers.<sup>xxvi</sup> The United States presence assisted with enabling the AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) to engage the population in a “serve and protect” role. Maintaining



legitimacy and effective access to the population requires a professional force, and all JSOTF-P operational elements are chartered with assisting the AFP and PNP in fully establishing their systems and methods.

The JSOTF-P Influence Operations Cell explains capacity building to the Philippine people as “training the AFP and PNP to fight lawlessness; villagers lived in fear of Kidnap for Ransom Gangs (KFRG) and other criminal acts, but now live in a more secure and peaceful environment. This increased capability provides improved security and allows the AFP and PNP to increase the legitimacy of the government.”<sup>xxvii</sup> The themes and messages of the overall influence campaign are constantly interwoven into each capacity building event. For instance, a U. S. element training a group of Filipino Scout Rangers constantly reinforces to them their legitimacy and professional duty throughout the course. The same message is applied to a different target audience, the population, when that same group of Scout Rangers delivers several boxes of books to a rural school. The perception is that the AFP has delivered much-needed books to the school, which is likely in an area vulnerable to insurgent recruitment. The books, meanwhile, may have come from USAID or any other number of sources external to the task force.

JSOTF-P also encourages other U. S. Government efforts to follow their lead in Influence Operations. For example, when USPACOM coordinates for TSCP events in the Philippines, JSOTF-P has the lead in bringing them to the Joint Operations Area (JOA) and leveraging them to maximize training benefits and operational effects. In addition, all services conduct Joint/Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events with their Filipino counterparts, to include Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs, Marine Special

Operations Teams, DEA, FBI, and other security and police agencies. This is a coordinated effort to increase the professional capacity of each Philippine agency to operate both in an autonomous capacity, and in a more interoperable manner within their government. Once the government is able to effectively communicate within itself, it can begin to effectively engage the population in the form of humanitarian support and civil-military operations.

### **Civil-Military Operations (CMO)**

Providing basic human needs further legitimizes the government and aids in positively influencing a malleable population. Backed by U. S. assistance and resources, the AFP and PNP bring civil infrastructure and humanitarian support to the people who need it most. This primarily comes in the form of free medical, dental, veterinary, and engineering assistance to communities in need. The JSOTF-P Influence Cell publishes products stating that “Aside from providing security they are armed with the tools and resources to rebuild schools and hospitals, provide medical and dental care, and provide fresh water.”<sup>xxviii</sup> The method of application begins with a targeting process to identify which communities stand most vulnerable to a particular threat, followed by a planning process that incorporates the Philippine Security Forces and local leaders (building capacity and strengthening the bond between the government and the people). Usually, the needy communities that are most actively involved with both supporting their government and turning their people away from lawlessness are the ones that receive the CMO support, whether a small event or a larger venue.

One of the most effective CMO venues overall is the yearly Balikatan (Shouldering the Load Together<sup>xxix</sup>). This exercise has directly supported multiple lines

of operation in the past several years, but most notable is that Filipino Forces are in the lead when it comes to engaging the population, with U. S. Forces providing significant material and personnel support. JSOTF-P also employs some special longer-duration programs, often with U. S. Embassy support, to teach vocational skills to local communities, thereby generating income, increasing prosperity, and influencing communities to support the government. BG Juancho Sabban, a U. S. Naval War College graduate and currently the Commandant of the Philippine Corps, heavily employs civil-military operations, noting, “When you go down to [the people’s] level, adopt their ways, they will take you in.”<sup>xxx</sup> Most successful Filipino military leaders have adopted the same philosophy over the past several years, as illustrated by the AFP’s SALA’AM (Special Advocacy on Literacy/Livelihood and Advancement for Muslims) Program.<sup>xxxi</sup> It has become standard practice to integrate CMO into nearly every AFP operation in Mindanao.

Major Ed Lopacienski, a former JSOTF-P J39 and PSYOP Company Commander, reiterated that the message here is clear to the people: “reject violence and embrace peace, and good things will come to your village.”<sup>xxxii</sup> Historically, the Abu Sayyaf Group conducted retributive attacks on communities that supported government-led peace initiatives, especially those that involved American support. However, the new paradigm is that the ASG knows if they attack civil-military projects then they will lose the support of the local population, thereby “forcing the enemy to collaborate in its own defeat.”<sup>xxxiii</sup> Furthermore, many of the families of ASG members belong to those communities, and would not refuse free treatment. For the AFP this is an opportunity to show these families and sympathizers first-hand that the government cares about them, a

demonstration not replicable by the Abu Sayyaf. It is also an opportunity to engage the people on a personal level, thereby allowing effective Information Operations among a willing and supportive population.

### **Information Operations (IO)**

Cooperation and support of a population is integral to gathering the intelligence needed to weed out insurgents, or render them ineffective. Establishing that connection between the government and the people, via CMO or otherwise productive engagement, is vital to conducting effective operations within that battlespace. Maintaining the connection is often the challenge. To maintain the attention of, access to, and support from the population during the conduct of Influence Operations, the task force requires constant dialogue to reinforce the themes and messages. Providing a deliberate range and amount of influential information to target audiences and local populations increases two-way dialogue. The most basic benefits are that the people learn about their government and why they should support it. Meanwhile, the government and task force learn otherwise unattainable information about social dynamics, attitudes, and insurgent activities, and elements of the insurgency begin to question their own decision-making. This facilitates government actions to sway or remove the insurgents, and the population is rewarded with CMO engagements or other incentives. As the process gains momentum the wedge is driven further between the population and the insurgents. There are numerous methods and techniques of disseminating the deliberate themes and messages to include radio, television, social events, flyers, posters and other social media; JSOTF-P employs the full spectrum. This is especially important in setting conditions to

conduct Intelligence Support Operations, and effectively managing the Information Environment in the aftermath.

### **Intelligence Support Operations**

Intelligence Support Operations, those activities designed to track and interdict terrorist leadership and networks, have become increasingly successful due to the influence progress throughout the other three LOO. The AFP's capacity to conduct effective tactical operations, CMO, psychological operations, and IO has increased exponentially over the past decade. Here, the U. S. provides the Philippine Government and security forces with access to information, intelligence, and modern technology to help them locate and neutralize the threats, most importantly JI and ASG. JSOTF-P methods include embedding Liaison Coordination Elements into AFP units (at their request), conducting Subject Matter Expert Exchanges throughout the country, leveraging U. S. Embassy resources, agencies, and programs to facilitate interoperability, and encouraging AFP leadership and staff to participate in the daily activities of the joint operations center. The largest target groups for influence in this LOO are the Philippine Government, the terror groups and their leadership, and the Philippine people. The goal of the U. S. Mission and JSOTF-P, with respect to the government and military, is to maximize support to operations, while simultaneously increasing their self-reliance and capacity to operate autonomously. The combined U. S. and R. P. goals for influencing the terror groups is to force them to surrender, disband, foster dissent within their ranks, and fear defeat by a stronger legitimate force.

### **Counterargument**

Recalling that Influence Operations should be the predominant focus (or, the main effort) in a counterinsurgency environment, some would argue that Influence Operations are a supporting effort to conventional military operations. This may be true if the operational goal was to accomplish a quick kinetic defeat and withdraw U. S. effort from the region. However, given the increasingly irregular character of contemporary warfare, it is unlikely that the United States will become involved in a short-duration, high-intensity conflict in the near future. The most likely scenario is that the United States will continue to engage in protracted conflicts in underdeveloped countries, thereby necessitating a degree of proficiency in stability operations. The conventional mindset of destroying the enemy to control the population<sup>xxxiv</sup> contradicts the idea of stability in the long term, as both the destruction and controlling of any segments of the population will surely lead to further discontent. This is assuming that the destruction of the enemy is accomplished quickly in a kinetic manner, and the controlling of the population is through the presence of a superior security force. However, the more unconventional mindset of controlling the population in order to allow you to destroy the enemy<sup>xxxv</sup> establishes a basis on which to build a more durable and attainable environment of regional stability, the most likely desired endstate. This mindset is driven towards “controlling” the population through influence, and providing the things they need the most such as basic human needs and a legitimate government, thereby giving them an alternative to supporting the insurgency. It also takes into account the ambiguity and requisite long duration of the operation, rather than setting unrealistic time-driven benchmarks of neutralizing all the terrorists, establishing security, and handing the mission over to a host nation that does not have the capacity to maintain it. Trying to

“kill all the terrorists” (a common parochialism) will only serve to create more insurgents and prolong hostilities, as our contemporary adversaries are ideologically driven and are capable of influencing their recruiting pool within the population. Further, stability operations are designed to produce long-term results, and require joint and interagency interoperability, as well as a degree of cultural understanding.

In order to achieve these long-term results the force must have a clear vision of their employment method. COL Gian Gentile, history professor at West Point, challenges current counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and contends that the center of gravity in a COIN fight is not the population, but rather is the enemy itself. COL Gentile refers to COIN doctrine as an “applied scientific process [that aligns] the people to their government.”<sup>xxxvi</sup> Examining this from his perspective, his derisive reference holds some validity in that true COIN is not a regimented process with clear tactical objectives. However, what COL Gentile does not address is the human dimension on both sides. In the affected nation, the relevant population will generally choose the side that provides them with the greatest stability (this is not a scientific process, but more so factors of social dynamics and human nature). For the executors of COIN operations, there are requisite degrees of cultural understanding, professional maturity, and patience that are inextricably linked to the degree and speed of success. Therefore, it is incumbent on the executing forces to *influence* the relevant population to align themselves with their government. There is little scientific about the process, though skeptics who overlook the human dimension can interpret the manual (FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*) as a lock-step method that necessarily applies to any operating environment. As with any operation, the commander of an Influence Operation, primarily conducted in a COIN environment, is

responsible for providing clarity of the employment method for his forces. The most critical guidance addresses the delineation between kinetic operations as a main effort versus one of many supporting efforts, as well as the primary role of American forces. In an Influence Operation the primary role of the main effort will most likely be building the host nation's capacity to operate effectively in an autonomous role, and gaining the required popular support for the government.

### **Recommendations for Future Success**

The most effective way to prepare any force to operate in an ambiguous environment is to conduct realistic and adaptive training. Leaders must inform themselves of current events and recent crises to stay informed on the current global operating environment. This allows leaders to plan and train for the most likely contingencies, rather than attempting to broadly apply conventional training to all scenarios. TSCP events provide excellent opportunities to train with Coalition Force partners and exchange lessons learned from several theaters. In addition, they provide a venue for building strong relationships between partner nation militaries. All commanders should seek to participate in TSCP events, especially those who command units preparing to deploy. Those units that are regionally oriented must incorporate regional culture and language training into all training throughout the year. Understanding that it is not possible to prepare for every crisis around the globe (i.e. learning all cultures and languages), all units must direct some focus on working through interpreters, understanding insurgencies and counterinsurgency operations, and understanding civil infrastructure. Establishing a baseline proficiency will save the



executing forces time once they arrive in theater, and will likely establish productive relationships with the host nation from the outset.

Influence Operations is a term that requires more attention. While it is frequently used, few can clearly encapsulate its scope and relevance. A common reference would assist in categorizing operations, providing commanders and staffs with planning direction, and establishing realistic training based on a common understanding of mission scope. Incorporating the above description of Influence Operations into joint doctrine will establish that common reference and facilitate better institutional understanding.

## **Conclusion**

Influence Operations are not a new form of operations, because all operations inherently have some degree of influence on the indigenous people and host nation government. They are the synergetically focused efforts of multiple lines of operation, united under an overall theme to influence a target group for the purpose of accomplishing political, military and/or regional stability goals. Understanding the culture, constantly engaging in nation building activities with the population, and enabling the host nation government to become independently effective are critical to long-term regional stability. JSOTF-P has deliberately applied this method throughout the past several years and observed a great deal of progress in all areas, yet continues to learn and grow as the dynamic environment continues to change. Regardless of the environment, the success of any Influence Operation hinges on the ability of the task force to influence the center of gravity, the population, better than the adversary.

## **Endnotes**

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<sup>i</sup> Irregular War is defined as violent struggles among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over relevant populations. (DODD 3000.07, December 1, 2008).

<sup>ii</sup> COL James Linder, during a conversation with the author in the Philippines, November 2005.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*. Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, Second Draft (Washington, DC: CJCS, 14 December 2004), GL-12.

<sup>v</sup> Rob Sentse and Arno Storm, "The Battle for the Information Domain", *IO Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, February 2010, 7.

<sup>vi</sup> Edward M. Lopacienski, "Influence Operations: Deterrence of Terrorists and Insurgents in the Southern Philippines" (research paper, Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2010), 1. Lopacienski states: "As defined by Chalmers Johnson, a population is in either equilibrium or disequilibrium with the state. Socio-political homogeneity exists to the degree that the policies and social conditions of the state meet the expectations and values of the population. When these conditions are no longer in harmony a disequilibrium will then exist between the state and significant portions of the population creating sufficient conditions for the development of insurgencies, rebellion, civil war, etc."

<sup>vii</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, Second Edition (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 1982), 41.

<sup>viii</sup> This definition is the combined work of the author and MAJ Edward Lopacienski as influenced by our combined operational experience during OEF-P, as well as the combined command visions and philosophies of COLs James Linder, David Maxwell, and William Coultrup during their respective tenures as JSOTF-P Commander. The author served five tours in OEF-P between 2004 and 2008, as an SFOD-A Commander, ARSOF LNO, and finally as the JSOTF-P J3.

<sup>ix</sup> David Kilcullen, in a 2007 NOETIC brief, delineates popular perception into the emotive ("hearts") component and the cognitive ("minds") component.

<sup>x</sup> Richard M. Crowell, "War in the Information Age: A Primer for Cyberspace Operations in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Warfare" (research paper, Newport, RI: Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2010), 3. The Information Environment (IE) is defined in Joint Doctrine as "The aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information. The actors include leaders, decision makers, individuals, and organizations. Resources include the materials and systems employed to collect, analyze, apply, or disseminate information. The information environment is where humans and automated systems observe, orient, decide, and act upon information, and is therefore the principal environment of decision-making. The information environment is made up of three interrelated dimensions: physical, informational, and cognitive... These dimensions are inextricably linked." Diagram sent to the author by Professor Crowell via email, 26 April 2010.

<sup>xi</sup> Linda Robinson, *Masters of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs™, 2004), 183.

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- xii Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, trans., Daniel Lee (New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), 8.
- xiii Gordon H. McCormick & Frank Giordano, "The Dynamics of Insurgency", paper presented to the Insurgency Board of Experts, Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2002.
- xiv Gordon H. McCormick, "Things Come Together," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2007, 301.
- xv This narrative is Special Forces (SF) institutional lore, and most SF candidates are exposed to vignettes like this throughout the Special Forces Qualification Course. It is recalled in the author's own words.
- xvi Influence Superiority, a non-doctrinal term, is essentially conducting Influence Operations (as defined in the Influence Operations Foundations section) more effectively than an adversary.
- xvii The NPA represents one of the greatest threats to the Philippine government due to their strong organization, numbers, recruiting, and offensive capability. It is one of the few organizations that are capable of physically attacking (to some degree) the financial and political epicenter in Manila.
- xviii John Falk, "Terror in Paradise: The Deadly Island Battlefield Where America is Actually Winning the War," *Outside*, February 2007, 76.
- xix John A. Nagl, in foreword of David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), x.
- xx Robert H. Scales, Jr., "Culture-Centric WARFARE" (U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 0041798X, October 2004, Vol. 130, Issue 10), 6.
- xxi USPACOM, JSOTF-P unclassified promotional video, as created and published by the JSOTF-P J39 and Influence Operations Cell in 2008.
- xxii Ibid.
- xxiii Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 37. Mr. Abuza describes the circumstances of the Jabidah Massacre on Corregidor, wherein several Muslim commando recruits were killed under mysterious circumstances. This was the immediate catalyst that led to the formation of the MNLF.
- xxiv Gordon H. McCormick, "Things Fall Apart," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2007, 337. McCormick refers to the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines, which was most volatile between 1948 and 1950. A 1948 ceasefire fell apart due to the Philippine Government's inability to control the actions of their own forces, thus alienating a large part of the indigenous population and swaying them in favor of the Huk insurgency. The Philippine forces lost their legitimacy in the eyes of the population, thereby making it easy for a Huk influence effort to assimilate popular support throughout many provinces. In this case the fence sitters chose the side of the insurgents, which is not commonly a situation from which the government can recover.
- xxv This was illustrated in several Commander's Comments of SFODA SITREPs to JSOTF-P throughout the first few years of Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines.

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<sup>xxvi</sup> It is important for the reader to understand that this *was not* the case throughout the entire Philippines, and that the AFP was well respected in most areas even during that time. The affected areas referred to herein are generally those that contain the “relevant population”, or the population from which various secessionist groups may draw support. The MNLF used the Jabidah Massacre, among other things, as propaganda in Mindanao to sow sedition against the Government of the Philippines.

<sup>xxvii</sup> JSOTF-P promotional video, 2008.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxix</sup> Asia Pacific Defense Forum Staff, “From Balikatan to Mudslide Relief” (Asia Pacific Defense FORUM, Winter 2006-2007), 39.

<sup>xxx</sup> Falk, 80.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Armed Forces of the Philippines, *SALA’AM Manual*, (Camp Aguinaldo – Quezon City, Republic of the Philippines: AFP SOT Center, 2005), i. The AFP began the SALA’AM (Special Advocacy on Literacy/Livelihood and Advancement for Muslims) Program as “the cornerstone of the AFP campaign in the Southern Philippines”, according to MGEN Hermogenes C. Esperon, Jr. in 2005. U. S. Civil Affairs and PSYOP provided advice and assistance in developing the program of instruction, manual, and initial operating capability, but the AFP has significantly increased their own capacity to conduct this Civil-Military Engagement on their own. The program continues successfully today.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Lopacienski, throughout multiple I/O working groups 2006-2008 during his tenure as the JSOTF-P J39.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Falk, 79.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> McCormick, “Things Fall Apart”, 333-336.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Gian P. Gentile, “Our COIN Doctrine Removes the Enemy from the Essence of War.” *Armed Forces Journal* online, <http://www.afji.com/2008/01/3207722> (accessed 29 April 2010), 1.

## APPENDIX A

### Threat Groups in the Philippines

The Abu Sayyaf Group<sup>xxxvii</sup> (Arabic “*Bearer of the Sword*” – ASG, formerly known as Al-Harakatul al-Islamiya<sup>xxxviii</sup>), most notoriously known for brutal kidnappings, beheadings, bombings, assassinations and extortion was founded by Abdurajak Janjalani, after the ASG split from the Moro National Liberation Front in 1991.<sup>xxxix</sup> The Philippine National Police killed Janjalani, the first leader of ASG, in 1998. Their professed ideology is to establish an independent theocratic Islamic state in Mindanao<sup>xl</sup>, though the group has consistently demonstrated “no willingness to negotiate a political settlement.”<sup>xli</sup> While this may have been the driving focus under Janjalani, a seasoned *mujahidin* fighter who fought in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation, the current remnants of the group primarily engage in criminal actions and terrorism to discredit the government and fund their cause. ASG leadership and ranks have suffered great losses in the past few years at the hands of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), but still share some collective goals with other violent extremist organizations like Jemaah Islamiyah.

Jemaah Islamiyah<sup>xlii</sup> (“*Islamic Community*” - JI) is a jihadi Islamist Southeast Asian terrorist network, based in Indonesia and established by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir in 1993 when they broke from Darul Islam.<sup>xliii</sup> While JI remains independent from al-Qaeda, it has strong affiliations as JI is led by *mujahidin*<sup>xliv</sup> who have served in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>xlv</sup> JI has suffered severe losses of their leadership and recruiting freedom of movement due to increased pressure from Indonesian and Philippine Security Forces. However, their goal of establishing a sovereign Muslim state continues to unite them (internally and with elements of

the Moro Islamic Liberation Front), and serves as a catalyst when recruiting from the Southern Philippines, Sabah (Malaysia) and other remote areas of Southeast Asia.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)<sup>xlvi</sup> is a belligerent organization in the Southern Philippines that also seeks to establish an independent Islamic state. The MILF broke away from the Moro National Liberation Front<sup>xlvii</sup> (MNLF, the current political party that administers the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)) citing ideological differences. The group continues to engage in anti-government rhetoric and violent acts, while recruiting from Mindanao to bolster its considerable ranks.

Balik Islam<sup>xlviii</sup> (Tagalog “*Return to Islam*”) is a countrywide underground movement to convert Christians to Islam, on the questionable basis that all Filipinos were originally Muslim before the Catholic Spanish colonized the Philippines. The movement is generally peaceful, though the ASG and MILF have capitalized on the beliefs of some of these new members and conducted successful recruiting. Converts to Balik Islam played roles in every major or attempted attack in 2005.<sup>xlix</sup>

Kidnap for Ransom Gangs (KFRG) are prevalent in the southern Philippines, and often affiliate themselves with the MILF or ASG (though either rarely recognizes them). The ASG has historically used some of these gangs for their area expertise, human contacts, logistical support and navigational skills through terrain unfamiliar to the ASG.<sup>1</sup>

There are many other smaller Islamist groups that contribute to the overall threat to stability in the Philippines, like the Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG) and Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM). The New People’s Army (NPA) is not Islamist at all, but rather the militant wing of the Communist Peoples’ Party of the Philippines. Also known as the Communist Terrorist Movement, their goals are entirely different but many of their methods (i.e.

delegitimizing the government, recruiting from the population, etc.) similarly contribute to regional instability.<sup>li</sup>

## Endnotes

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xxxvii For a detailed history of the Abu Sayyaf Group, see *Seeds of Terror*, by Maria Ressa, and *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror*, by Zachary Abuza.

xxxviii Zachary Abuza, “Balik Islam: The Return of Abu Sayyaf” (information paper, Carlisle, PA: U. S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute), 2.

xxxix Lito Dimabildo, *Southern Philippine Secessionist Groups* (Fort Andres Bonifacio, Republic of the Philippines: HQ, Intelligence and Security Group, PA, 2004), 86.

xl Ibid, 98.

xli Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 207.

xlii For a detailed history of Jemaah Islamiyah, see *Jemaah Islamiyah: Radical Islamism in Indonesia*, by Greg Barton, and *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror*, by Zachary Abuza.

xliii Greg Barton, *Jemaah Islamiyah: Radical Islamism in Indonesia* (Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press, 2004), 113.

xliv *Mujahidin* are Muslim fighters, or those engaged in *jihad* (holy struggle)(Barton, 115).

xlv Barton, 113.

xlvi For a detailed history of the MILF, see *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao*, by Marites Danguilan Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria.

xlvi Dimabildo, 57.

xlvi For more on the Balik Islam movement, see “Balik Islam: The Return of the Abu Sayyaf”, by Zachary Abuza.

xlvi Abuza, “Balik Islam”, ix.

<sup>l</sup> The author refers to the 2005 example of Isnilon Hapilon’s group attempting to move through the Daguma Mountain Range on Mindanao by using the Abu Suffia KFRG for food and shelter, and as guides. The Abu Suffia Gang has since been eliminated by Philippine Security Forces.

<sup>li</sup> The NPA represents one of the greatest threats to the Philippine government due to their strong organization, numbers, recruiting, and offensive capability. It is one of the few organizations that are capable of physically attacking (to some degree) the financial and political epicenter in Manila.

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